

Commentaries on the Life and Reign of Charles I. have long been superseded by the works of later historians ; but they won for their author an honorary degree at Oxford to which he was presented as the 'optimi regis vindex optimus' ; and they have won for him also lasting credit as one of the first of English historians to recognise the value and attempt the exploration of the masses of manuscript material lodged in the British Museum and elsewhere.

Among his contemporaries and not least among those whose praise was best worth having, Isaac D'Israeli's reputation stood high. Byron, Scott, Southey, Rogers, were all among his admirers. 'There's a man,' said Rogers to Southey, 'with only half an intellect who writes books that must live.' Byron was less caustic in his appreciation. 'I don't know a living man's books,' he wrote to his publisher, 'I take up so often — or lay down more reluctantly — as Israeli's ;'¹ 'If there is anything new of Israeli's send it me. He is the Bayle of literary speculation and puts together more amusing information than anybody.'²

Shortly after the publication of the first two cantos of *Childe Ear old* Byron and D'Israeli met, apparently not for the first time, and a scrap in Benjamin Disraeli's hand has preserved his father's recollection of his intercourse with the poet.

I never knew a man with a more modest, gentlemanly, and perfectly unaffected manner. He was now in full fame, and

¹ Byron's *Letters and Journals* (Ed.: R. E. Prothero), IV., p. 274. The letter reproaches Murray for his indiscretion in showing D'Israeli Byron's copy of the original issue of the *Literary Character* full of marginal notes and emendations. This copy was the proximate cause of a revised and enlarged edition of that work, which appeared in 1818. Byron read the book in its new form and added notes which were embodied in the edition of 1822. In a note to the preface of the 1818 edition Byron declared that he had read D'Israeli's works 'oftener than perhaps those of any English writer whatever, except such as treat of Turkey.'

., V., p. 390.